

Town of Hubbardston

Finance Committee – Minutes

March 28, 2022

6:30 pm

SLADE BUILDING

Meeting called to order: 6.30 PM
Members present: Joshua Lerner, Susan Rayne, Charles Reed, Peter Russell, Peter Walker
Other attendees: David Nixon, Acting Town Administrator; Michael Stoll, resident

- 1) *Town Administrator's Report.* Mr. Nixon presented his report dated March 28, 2022. He noted the following:
 - a) *American Rescue Plan Act Update.* Mr. Nixon noted that, of the Town's \$1,443,421 official allotment, the Selectboard had approved proposals totaling \$888,000. Ms. Rayne noted that she serves on the ARPA Committee and asked for a sense of the meeting as to the ARPA Committee's decision to reject the Fire Department's proposals for a new pump fire truck and a new ambulance, which she has asked the ARPA Committee to reconsider. It was the unanimous sense of the meeting that both proposals be recommended by the ARPA Committee to the Selectboard. Ms. Rayne indicated that she would relay that information to the ARPA Committee at their next meeting, scheduled for March 30, 2022.
 - b) *Commonwealth ARPA and Surplus Local Shares.* Mr. Nixon informed the Committee that additional funds would be forthcoming from the Commonwealth; at the request of Ms. Rayne, he will investigate whether restrictions on the use of those funds like those of the federal ARPA will be in place.
 - c) *Commonwealth Winter Recovery Bill.* Mr. Nixon informed the Committee that he expects that in the next several weeks the Town will receive about \$175,000 in additional funds for local road construction and repair.
 - d) *United States Infrastructure Act.* Mr. Nixon noted that under this new legislation, municipalities will have to submit competitive applications for federally eligible projects. More information is expected.
 - e) *Route 68 Right of Way Project.* The Town has delivered to abutting landowners offers to compensate them for the taking of easements; the Selectboard will act on the offers at their April 11, 2022, meeting.
 - f) *Cell Tower.* Rutland continues to delay the project for unspecified reasons. Mr. Nixon continues to inquire weekly as to status.
 - g) *Public Safety/Community Center Complex.* The ARPA Committee approved funding a feasibility study.
 - h) *FY2023 Annual Town Meeting.* The Annual Town Meeting is scheduled for June 7, 2022, for which Mr. Nixon and Mr. McLane are developing both the FY2023 operating budget

and capital improvement plan. Mr. McLane returns from his deployment on May 2, 2022, and in response to Ms. Rayne's question as to transition Mr. Nixon indicated that he is working with the Selectboard to mitigate an abrupt end date to his service as Acting Town Administrator.

- i) *Tax Title and Foreclosures.* The Town has foreclosed on several properties and is determining whether to retain them for municipal purposes or to sell them at auction.
 - j) *YTD FY 2022 Revenues and Expenses.* Mr. Nixon provided an abbreviated summary of FY2022 revenues and expenses for the 8 months ending February 28, 2022, noting that actual revenues exceed target revenues for this period.
 - k) *Town Actions and Community Events.* Mr. Nixon provided a calendar of these activities.
- 2) *Review of Acting Town Administrator's Budget, Fiscal Year 2023.* Mr. Nixon gave a summary presentation of the Town's operating budget presented to the Committee as of March 7, 2022.
- a) Mr. Nixon noted that the following day both QRSD and Monty Tech provided their respective assessments, totaling approximately \$700,000 higher than that forecast in the March 7, 2022, Town budget. A discussion ensued as to the calculations on which the QRSD assessment is based and the preparation and presentation of the QRSD budget by the School's administrative staff.
 - b) Mr. Nixon noted the following four additional matters:
 - i) The Parks Commission had requested an additional \$5000 for the recreational field cleanup; Mr. Nixon had declined the request. Ms. Rayne indicated that she would invite Sandra Barry, Chair of the Commission, to attend the next Committee meeting to discuss.
 - ii) He and Mr. McLane were considering the amount and timing of the Town's assessment for the Worcester Regional Retirement System.
 - iii) Because the City of Gardner has refused to renew its agreement with the Town for shared building inspection, a new expense line item for the engagement of a building inspector has been included.
 - iv) The Committee's reserve transfer fund budget amount has been restored to \$35,000.
- 3) *Other/new business and matters not anticipated by the Chair.*
- a) *19 High Street.* Ms. Rayne informed the Committee that the Committee, together with the Selectboard and others, had received a written solicitation for the Town to consider the purchase of real property located at 19 High Street. Mr. Nixon indicated that more due diligence would be conducted by the Town to determine whether to proceed.
 - b) *Reserve Fund Transfer.* Mr. Nixon presented a request for a reserve fund transfer to Building Salaries to cover an unanticipated invoice in the amount of \$15,181 for inspection services performed for the 147 Williamsville Road solar project. On motion duly made by Mr. Reed and seconded by Mr. Russell, it was unanimously

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VOTED: To approve the Request for Transfer from the Reserve Fund dated March 24, 2024 [sic] in the amount of \$15,181, to be transferred to Acct # 1000-241-5100-0000 (Building Salaries).

4) *Adjournment.* On motion duly made by Mr. Reed and seconded by Mr. Walker, it was unanimously

VOTED: To adjourn.

ADJOURNED at 8:19 PM.

Minutes submitted by:
Minutes approved by:

Susan Rayne, Clerk *Pro Tem*
Susan Rayne, Chair



04/06/2022

Susan Rayne

Date